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TITLE: Risk Factors for Unprotected Sexual Intercourse Among a Massachusetts Sample of Young Men Who Have Sex with Men

AUTHORS: Cranston, K (MA Department of Public Health, Boston, MA); Smith, C (Abt Associates, Cambridge, MA)

BACKGROUND: Many studies, including two conducted in the Boston area, confirm that many young men who have sex with men (MSM)—between a quarter and half of those studied—had engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse recently. This study, which was conducted in conjunction with the Massachusetts HIV Prevention Planning Group (MPPG), focused on young MSM (ages 13 through 24), over-sampling for men of color, to determine associated risk factors for unprotected sex in this group.

METHODS: Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires with a convenience sample in four cities in Eastern Massachusetts. The questionnaires were completed by over 250 young men and were complemented by qualitative interviews with 12 respondents.

RESULTS: Three risk factors were found to be related to unprotected sexual intercourse (anal and/or vaginal) in the past year:

- 1) having both male and female sexual partners (83% vs. 47% with male partners only, $\chi^2 = 24.6$, $p < .001$);
- 2) having ever been forced to have sex (80% versus 52%, $\chi^2 = 13.6$, $p < .001$);
- 3) meeting partners in anonymous locations (70% versus 48%, $\chi^2 = 9.8$, $p < .01$).

CONCLUSIONS: These factors have implications for HIV prevention: to continue to direct resources to prevention efforts focused on young men who have sex with men, to educate behaviorally bisexual young men, to continue outreach in public sex venues, and to incorporate HIV risk reduction in the treatment of survivors of sexual trauma.

PRESENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Kevin Cranston, M. Div.

Address: MDPH—AIDS
250 Washington St, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Telephone: (617) 624-5325

Fax: (617) 624-5399

E-mail: Kevin.Cranston@state.ma.us